

# THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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## Prayer emphasis continues across state

By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

On January 3, a group of passionate Christians gathered in the sanctuary of Woodville Church in Woodville for the beginning of what would prove to be a movement that reached into every part of the state — from the Alabama border to the Mississippi River, and from the coastal counties to the Tennessee line.

Covering Mississippi in Prayer, the prayer emphasis which at its heart is a movement to encourage Mississippi Baptists and others to pray for self, servants, and souls during 2011, began with its first worship rally at Woodville Church, which claims to be the oldest Baptist church in the state. The site was not chosen by accident — the church symbolizes both the beginning of Baptist work in the state and the beginning of the prayer emphasis.

From the initial group of 27 participants at that rally, the campaign grew both in number and in geographical span. Estimated participants numbered over 9,300 over the state in 93 rallies.

Rallies were held in every county in Mississippi on courthouse lawns, in churches, on the ruins of a church destroyed by a tornado, in county courthouses, and in prisons. Crowds braved wind, rain, and bone-chilling temperatures. Inches of snow and closed roads hampered travel early on.

The rallies were held from Jan. 3 through April 26. The final rally was held at the men's unit of the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl.

Statistics indicate that 67,000 commitment cards to pray every day for the balance of the year were distributed, along with 52,048 prayer pins and 10,000 car decals. Prayer warriors returning the commitment cards thus far to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) number 18,551.

Steve Stone, MBCB associate executive director for church growth, participated in almost every rally. "The rallies exceeded our expectations beyond anything we could imagine, in that we were hoping for 10,000 prayer warriors, and in response to the pins and cards that were sent out there were five times that amount. I believe that there are many more that are engaged in Covering Mississippi in Prayer that have made it a part of their routine prayer habit. The numbers may be even greater, going beyond what we know the numbers to be."

that to the want to encourage people that as we approach the halfway point of Covering Mississippi in Prayer, that this is just the beginning, not the end. We want people to finish strong, and to understand that this is not just an emphasis for 2011 but that it would continue into the future."

Futral added, "Now that we've done all the rallies, what has been difficult for me to convey to people is that this is not some program the convention is rolling out, but a manifestation of the reality of calling people out to pray every day. The amazing thing to me is not just the numbers of people who came out to the rallies in the cold dead of winter, and most of the time stood outside for an hour in anticipation of these

prayer events, but the number of people who signed up to say, 'I'm going to pray every day, covering Mississippi in prayer.'

"The numbers were significant, but what was more significant than that was the constant conversation that comes up about people who have had a genuine, personal encounter and new insights into their walk with the Lord. That is a daily, reoccurring event even now for me."

"Another component that is taking place right now as we pray for self, servants, and souls is that this prayer emphasis is leading into our 2012 theme, 'Telling the Story of Jesus,'" Stone said. "Praying for souls — that will help us fulfill our theme. Prayer is at the foundation of everything we do next year."

"I received an email from one of our pastors yesterday, unsolicited," Futral said. "He was telling of how his approach to ministry and his walk with the Lord had changed. He was simply sharing out of the overflow of his heart. Another pastor told me, 'You know, I didn't know this would make such a difference in my life. I preached on what



**TO THE CEILING** — Wayne Pinkerton, procurement officer for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, mounts Covering Mississippi in Prayer Commitment cards on a huge display in the lobby of the Baptist Building in downtown Jackson. More than 18,500 of the cards have been returned by individuals from all over the state who have committed to pray every day in 2011 for self, servants, and souls. (Photo by Tony Martin)

we'd heard in the rallies in the church, and it goes on still in our church."

"Many of our pastors, church leaders, and church members have experienced something new in their own walk with God. That in itself opens up doors to ministry and impact in the communities in our state."

"In the prayer rallies, so many unexpected things took place. I walked into a fast-food restaurant, and the manager had on a pin. She saw mine and asked, 'Where did you get that?' She was a member of a charismatic church but she had the pin on. She didn't know who I was, and she started telling me about it. This was fascinating to me, and I asked her what it meant to her. 'I pray every day for Mississippi,' she said."

"Someone in her church had given the pin to her. This says to me that what God started He has loosed, and it's gone far beyond what we anticipated."

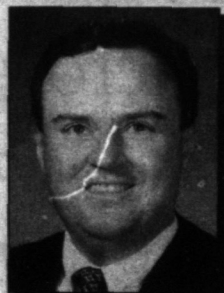
**Editor's note:** For more information on the year-long Covering Mississippi in Prayer emphasis, visit [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org).



**PRAYER RALLY** — Jim Futral (right), executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, addresses the Covering Mississippi in Prayer rally in downtown Tylertown earlier this year. The rally was one of 93 held in each county in the state to call Christians to pray every day during 2011 for self, servants, and souls. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



# EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

EDITOR  
William H. Perkins Jr.  
wperkins@mbcb.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Tony Martin  
tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN  
Benjamin Ivey  
bivey@mbcb.org

ADVERTISING  
Emily Jones  
ejones@mbcb.org

CIRCULATION MANAGER  
Brenda Quattlebaum  
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

EDITOR EMERITUS  
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:  
Archie Herrin, Columbia  
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Fax: (601) 292-3330  
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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## Racing toward a new low

Pop music has always been provocative and edgy. Most people would probably trace those characteristics to the beginning of the rock and roll era in the 1950s, when Bill Haley and the Comets suggestively encouraged teens to rock around the clock and Elvis Presley's energetic hips drove young girls to the verge of emotional collapse.

Pop music's hedonism began much earlier than that, but out of the relatively tame fifties grew the pop music of the sixties, with its glorification of drug use and free love and its clarion call to rebellion against anything establishment — including hair styles. The pop music of the eighties and nineties continued to push the boundaries, especially in the areas of drug use and sexual promiscuity. The hair styles didn't show any signs of improvement, either. The 21st century brought several new crops of pop music styles, but the outrageous behavior and open nihilism carried on for the most part.

That was then. This is now. The current practitioners of pop music are doing their best to set a new low, racing ever deeper into what seems to be a bottomless pit of cultural sewage. A new song and accompanying video by some of the biggest names in the music world have been released, and it's staggering in its depravity.

The main draw in the production is Kanye West, already a controversial figure in the music world. In the song and video entitled, *Monster?*, his extreme and endless profanity is instantly overwhelming — which is quite a feat considering he also crawls into bed with a pair of sprawling, obviously dead women and begins rearranging the positions of their bodies to suit his tastes.

Rick Ross, another big-time music star, is shown sitting on a throne and casually enjoying a cigar while surrounded by



women stripped to their underwear and hanging dead from nooses above him. Jay-Z contributes a performance while standing next to a naked, lifeless woman on a couch. Nicki Minaj is depicted as a psychotic dominatrix.

That's about all that can be printed in a family newspaper. Some watchdog groups seem to think there's a disturbing but unsurprising pattern here. "While it's inaccurate to condemn all of hip-hop as misogynistic, the violent imagery and lyrics in Kanye West's 'Monster' video (featuring dead white model corpses juxtaposed by black female vampires) can't be read in any other way," Yana Walton of the Women's Media Center said in an interview with Hollie McKay of FoxNews.

"While I personally have liked much of Kanye's music, his imagery and lyrics go beyond legitimizing violence to women — they fetishize it. Since gender based violence is a daily reality in our country, I urge Kanye to examine the harmful effects of using his fame in this manner."

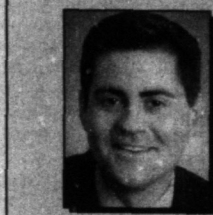
"Women in nooses, dismembered body parts, blood everywhere, violent and foul lyrics. In a sane world, this wouldn't sell one copy," Don Gainer, vice president of business and culture at the Media Research Center, told FoxNews. "His latest video gives us a peek into his mind and soul and, frankly, it's a dark, disgusting place where women are victimized and their bodies are treated as props for the 'monsters' singing. Misogyny? Absolutely."

West, for his part, argues that the song and video are art. Gainer disagrees. "Calling this video 'art' gives it more dignity than it deserves. Michelangelo created art. What Kanye West creates is appalling," he said.

Gainer closed his FoxNews interview with a disturbing scenario. "What next? Live human sacrifice?" he asked.

Don't laugh. Who would have ever thought we'd get to this point?

## GUEST OPINION:



### The nature of temptation

By Russell Moore  
Louisville, Ky.

Christians believe that temptation isn't merely biological. There's something wild and wicked afoot in the universe. These beings have an ancient strategy, and part of that is to shield us from the future. Desire gives way to sin, James tells us, and "sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (James 1:15).

Temptation only works if the possible futures open to you are concealed. Consequences, including those of Judgment Day, must be hidden from view or outright denied. That's why in humanity's ancestral sin the serpent told our mother Eve, "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4).

The tempting powers come after all of us in much the same way. Whatever our particular point of vulnerability is, they seek to distort the way we see our future. It doesn't matter if I know that eating deep-fat-fried

doughnuts every morning can raise my cholesterol levels, unless I can also imagine having a heart attack.

Almost every adultery situation I've ever seen includes a spouse who honestly believes that he or she is not going to get caught. The cheater often doesn't want the marriage to end in divorce. Instead, like the characters in today's headlines, he or she instead wants to keep everything the same: spouse, kids and lover too.

That's irrational and completely contrary to the way the world works. Anyone can see that but you can convince yourself — or be convinced — that it will work for you. You're special, after all. That's the way temptation functions. We put consequences out of our minds, both temporal and eternal consequences. We start to believe that

we are gods with power over good and evil and life and death, and then we do crazy things.

This doesn't have anything to do with intelligence. Satan is hyper-intelligent and yet he rages all the more against Christ and his people, "because he knows his time is short" (Revelation 12:12). In terms of the most basic principles of military strategy, that's crazy. What we need is not intelligence, but wisdom. Wisdom includes seeing where the way I want to go will lead (Proverbs 14:12).

I don't know who you are, reader, but I know you are probably not smarter than Anthony Weiner or Arnold Schwarzenegger or John Edwards — and neither am I.

Both of us are on the verge of wrecking our lives. We're probably not on the verge of a situation quite like any of those men, but the Gospel tells us we have vulnerabilities just the same, and they all can lead to destruction.

The answer isn't found in talent or strategy or brilliance. It's found in fear: the fear of the Lord and the vision of His future.

Moore, a Biloxi native, is dean of the school of theology at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. This column first appeared at his website, [RussellMoore.com](http://RussellMoore.com), and is reprinted here courtesy of Baptist Press.

## Homosexuals turn up heat on opponents

WASHINGTON (BP) — Peter Vidmar seemed like the perfect choice to serve as the Chief of Mission for next year's Olympics in London. A corporate motivational speaker and former Olympic champion, Vidmar since 2008 has been chairman of USA Gymnastics. Yet while he was offered and accepted the post, come summer 2012, Vidmar will not be the United States Chief of Mission.

Why? Because in 2008 he donated \$2,000 to support California's Proposition 8, the voter-approved legislation that defines marriage as between one man and one woman.

Vidmar's case was a controversy that more sputtered than erupted. On April 29, the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) announced that it had selected Vidmar as Chief of Mission. Over the following few days a handful of gay websites complained, citing Vidmar's background as an advocate for traditional marriage and his membership in the Mormon church.

On May 5, the Chicago Tribune posted an item on its sports blog, *Globetrotting*, in which only one athlete, figure skater Johnny Weir, said he opposed Vidmar's appointment.

In the same article, Vidmar assured columnist Philip Hersch he would serve and support all the Olympians regardless of their sexuality, and the chief executive officer of the USOC, Scott Blackmun, reaffirmed the committee's choice, saying the USOC respected Vidmar's right to express his religious convictions.

The next day, Vidmar announced he was resigning so his presence would not become a distraction to the upcoming games and the performances of the athletes.

Others have reacted differently to homosexual protests. When University of Michigan law students opposed Republican U.S. Senator Rob Portman of Ohio as this year's commencement speaker on the grounds that he "vocally and actively supports denying equal rights to gays and lesbians," the university held firm.

Except for a group of students staging a silent walkout, Portman's graduation speech came off without a hitch.

Likewise, some University of South Carolina students objected to the honorary degree their school was conferring on the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Bryant Wright, and called him an "advocate for hate." Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Church in suburban Atlanta, attended the ceremony, collected his diploma, and the event went on.

Portman and Wright do not have to depend on corporate invitations for their daily bread. What will happen to Vidmar's bookings and career, now that

he is on the radar of homosexual activist groups? Recent events surrounding law firm King and Spalding's decisions to renege on its contract to defend the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and drop the U.S. House of Representatives as a client suggest that Vidmar might have a hard time.

One day after King and Spalding, an international law firm based in Atlanta, withdrew from the case, The Weekly Standard obtained an internal email from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) activist group that lobbies for same sex marriage. The email revealed that the organization privately contacted King and Spalding clients to inform them of the firm's "wrongheaded decision" to represent the House.

Unapologetic, HRC spokesman Fred Sainz confirmed to The Washington Post that the group did indeed contact some of King and Spalding's Fortune 500 clientele so they could, in turn, bring pressure to bear against King and Spalding.

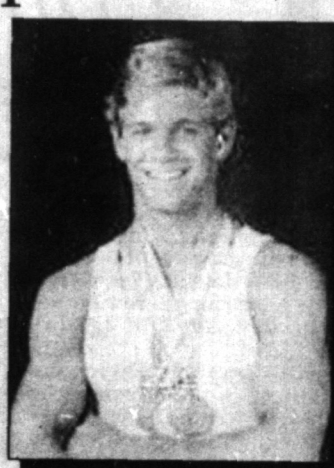
Though Sainz would not disclose which clients his group contacted, he did say, "We are an advocacy firm that is dedicated to improving the lives of gays and lesbians. It is incumbent on us to launch a full-throated educational campaign so firms know that these kinds of engagements will reflect on the way [their] clients and law school recruits think of [them]," adding, "We did all of this, and we're proud to have done it."

Maggie Gallagher, founder of the National Organization for Marriage, says this kind of professional intimidation is the same-sex lobby's new modus operandi for furthering its agenda. "Rather than try to win over voters, they threaten to hurt your business and go to clients and cause a fuss. This isn't confirmed yet, but according to the gay blogs, they succeeded in getting Coca-Cola to pressure King and Spalding," she says.

To date, the soft drink giant will neither confirm nor deny that it threatened to take its legal business elsewhere if the firm did not drop DOMA, but a Coca-Cola spokesman did point out that the company has a long history of support for "diversity."

Great as the legal implications of the HRC getting a major law firm to drop a case it finds objectionable are, perhaps even more significant is the case of Scott Eckern, former artistic director and chief operating officer of Sacramento's California Music Theatre.

After some homosexual theater professionals noticed his name on the website antigay-blacklist.com that listed people



Vidmar

who contributed money to support Proposition 8, they organized a boycott. Marc Shaiman, the Tony-award-winning composer of *Hairspray*, and Jeff Whitty, the Tony-award-winning playwright of *Avenue Q*, said they would not allow the theater to perform any of their future works while Eckern was employed there.

Homosexual groups urged Sacramento theatergoers not to patronize the venue, which is the largest nonprofit arts organization in the state and the oldest professional performing arts company in Sacramento. News reports included some of Eckern's colleagues expressing shock, saying that until the incident they had no idea of his beliefs concerning same sex marriage.

"I am disappointed that my personal convictions have cost me the opportunity to do what I love the most," Eckern, who had been employed with the theater for 23 years, said in a prepared statement. Before resigning, he publicly donated \$1,000 — the same amount he had given to support Prop 8 — to HRC.

Jennifer Roback Morse, president of the traditional marriage advocacy group The Ruth Institute, says the ramifications of tactics like HRC's are enormous, with homosexual activists essentially saying they expect businesses to police the political beliefs and

political activities of their employees and volunteers or face severe retribution.

However, same sex marriage proposals have been defeated in every state where it has appeared on the ballot. This would seem to indicate a serious disconnect between the actual power of homosexual groups and their perceived power in the business community. Gallagher says there's an easy explanation for the discrepancy — the work of major media.

"These elite networks of power use the echo chamber of the news media to exact a price and punish those who disagree with them," said Gallagher.

As an example, she offers Doug Manchester, a hotel developer in San Diego who donated money to support Prop 8. "[Gay groups] organized a protest in front of his hotel — no big deal, about 25 guys in red shirts, but you get 25 guys in red shirts and The New York Times publishes a major story on it and the echo chamber picks it up from there."

Gallagher says that while the reality is that HRC's bark is worse than its bite, "most regular people don't want to get bitten." Morse echoes her sentiments, saying that even though there's little evidence the homosexual lobby has a significant impact on customer behavior, when they begin to drum up negative coverage, "they all [the companies] completely fold. All of them. Including people who ought to know better."

Once a company gives in to the demands of groups like HRC, says Morse, it will only earn itself more reprisals. She believes that with the corporate world increasingly doing what voters will not — bowing to activists' demands that same sex marriage be treated as a civil right — how the Christian business community reacts to the pressure will be especially important.

"It is a fact that we sometimes have to pay a price for the sake of the Gospel," Morse said.

*Editor's note: Reprinted by permission of World News Service, where this story first appeared. Edited for length and style.*

## Looking back

10 years ago

Frank Stagg, former professor at New Orleans Seminary and author of ten books, dies at his home in Louisville, Ky., at the age of 89.

20 years ago

Messengers to the 134th Southern Baptist Convention adopt a budget of \$140,710,282, re-elect a conservative president, stake positions on a dozen social and constitutional issues, and hear a plea from U.S. President George H.W. Bush for voluntary prayer in schools.

50 years ago

Paul N. Nunnery, superintendent of the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village, announces the closing and abandonment of the school which has operated on the campus of the Village for many years, serving the first eight grades.



## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



## BIBLIOPHET

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004  
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LGE, KVFGXU, KVFGXU,  
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LVFVZAOVF UV HLZXX  
HVV LVZKVI QDVI, ZIC  
OLV ZIJVXH QA JQC  
ZHBVICGIJ ZIC CVHB-  
VICGIJ WDQI OLV HQI  
QA EZI.  
YQLI QIV: AGAOU-QIV

Clue: K = V

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Twenty-four: Forty-seven

## JUST FOR THE RECORD

- The State Literacy Missions Conference will be held at Crossgates Church, Brandon July 14 - 16. Basic workshops in Adult Reading & Writing, English as a Second Language, and Basic Bible Storytelling are offered, as well as several other topics to choose from. The conference begins Thursday at 1 p.m. and concludes at noon Saturday. For more information, contact Paula Smith, Mississippi WMU, at (800) 748-1651, ext. 336, or email psmith@mbcb.org.

- A number of artists from the Crossroad Quilters in Port Gibson will demonstrate their craft at Mississippi College July 14, featuring a brown bag lunch, beginning at 11 a.m. at the college's Gore Galleries. The show will run through Aug. 5. For more information, contact Randy Jolly at (601) 925-7770 or rjolly@mc.edu.

## IN PRAISE AND APPRECIATION OF THE VBS SERVANTS

Vacation Bible School is one of the most glorious annual events in our Baptist churches.

Tens of thousands of boys and girls attend Bible School and literally thousands come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord because of this great experience. Early one morning before summer officially arrived as I began my day-praying for self, servants, and souls, the Lord just brought to my mind the army of great men, women, and young people who are participating in leading these children day after day.

For several days they were the focus of my prayer time as I remembered servants who are making a difference in our world and in our churches. I was praying for those who were preparing, meeting with, caring about, teaching, and loving these children.

These wonderful servants give of their time and energy to be a part of this marvelous event. I want to say thank you and I want you to know that I am praying for you.

One of the things that caused me to come to this priority moment in praying for the servants in Vacation Bible School is the memories of so many wonderful people who touched my life as a youngster in Vacation Bible School. Until this day I recall things that I learned in VBS and my mind goes back to that source of infor-



Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

mation. That is pretty incredible! I remember the joy of making a birdhouse and being a part of some of the activities. Of course, I will always remember drinking the obligatory Kool-Aid.

Now there is a new generation of children who need to know Jesus. They still need loving and caring people who will flesh out the glory and magnificence of Jesus so that they can see and understand. Pray for these VBS servants that God will give them wisdom, stamina, and an unusual sense of calling as they spend hours with this treasure of wonderful children. So that you can think about some ways to pray for them, use VBS and pray for:

### V - Victorious Vision:

Pray that God will help them to see that the children's lives that are being impacted by their attention and care will not always be children.

Help them to see with a God kind of look and recognize that what appears to be

just little boys squirming and picking at each other or little girls chatting away are not far from being adults who will need a solid foundation of faith in order to face life.

**B - Biblical Brains:**  
Pray that the wonderful events of Scripture will come alive to them and then be conveyed to those children. There is nothing boring about the Word of God.

We make it boring, but it is not. Pray that these workers will so saturate their hearts with the majesty and magnitude of our great God that as they talk about Him, what He has done, and the way that He did it they will capture the imagination of the hearts of the children.

**S - Spiritual Sensitivity:**  
Vacation Bible School is not just a week of rushing from one activity to another. I believe it is a time woven together by the Lord Himself. Whether it is a fun activity that is taking place or a more serious moment of reflection about a decision for Christ, pray that God will help all of the servants in VBS to have the spiritual sensitivity to recognize that every passing second God can do a great work in the lives of the people who are there.

May this summer be blessed of the Lord and great joys and harvest come in every one of our Vacation Bible School experiences. Thank you for serving and for those of you who are not directly connected with the activities, do not miss out on praying for those who are. God bless you!

The author can be contacted at [jfutral@mbcb.org](mailto:jfutral@mbcb.org).



## CLASSIFIED ADS

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**FLOWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL OR PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER** to work with both the children's division and the Youth division as a coordinator not necessarily a teacher. Please send resumes to Flowood Baptist Church, 1649 Old Fannin Road, Flowood, MS 39232. For further information you may call 601-992-6464.

**ENTERPRISE BAPTIST CHURCH IN ENTERPRISE, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF STUDENTS.** Please send resumes to: [enterprisebaptist@att.net](mailto:enterprisebaptist@att.net) OR Enterprise Baptist Church C/O Minister of Students Search P.O. Box 186 Enterprise, MS 39330

| Mississippi Baptist State Church Softball Tournaments |               |            |       |                |
|---|---------------|------------|-------|----------------|
| Tournament  | SS Enrollment | Dates      | Cost  | Final Deadline |
| Men Class A   | 1-300         | July 29-30 | \$200 | July 1         |
| Men Class AA  | 301-700       | July 29-30 | \$200 | July 1         |
| Men Class AAA   | 701 and up    | July 15-16 | \$200 | July 1         |

All Tournaments will be held in Pearl, MS at the Center City Complex.

For more information or to download a registration form go to [www.msbaaptistrecreation.com](http://www.msbaaptistrecreation.com) or call 601.898.4969.

# Church continuing to challenge Chinese authorities

BEIJING (BP) — As members of Shouwang Church continue to stand against Beijing police and the Chinese government, members of other churches are showing solidarity with the illegal congregation to the point of getting arrested, too.

At least 20 Christians were arrested on June 5 during Shouwang Church's ninth straight week of defying the government by attempting to worship outdoors in a Beijing public square. Eighteen of the Christians were Shouwang members and two were members of other churches, although one of the members of the other churches apparently was arrested by mistake as he walked past the site.

Sixteen of the Christians were released by midnight and the other four released at noon the next day. The congregation is trying to meet outdoors because the government pressured the Christians out of their indoor facility.

It is not the first week that members of other churches have supported Shouwang's bold stance that has seen hundreds of Shouwang members arrested. Members of other churches have appeared at the site in recent weeks. The arrests begin before the service even starts.

Many more Shouwang members likely would have been arrested Sunday had police not placed most of the members under house arrest since Friday, preventing them from even leaving their house. The church has nearly 1,000 members. All the church's leaders have been under house arrest for weeks, and some members have lost their jobs and been forced from their



**PERSECUTION GROWS** — A photograph taken surreptitiously and smuggled out of China shows the moment the cross at the Chengnan Three-Self Church was pulled down as authorities in China's Jiangsu province forcibly demolished the building on Nov. 19 of last year. Communist officials have stepped up persecution of unregistered churches, arresting 160 members of Shouwang Church who refuse to cease gathering for worship although they have no place to meet. (BP file photo)

homes as the government pressures employers and landlords.

There were only a "few dozen" members who were not under house arrest Sunday morning, the church reported.

Shouwang Church's stance has served to inspire Christians worldwide. "We want to thank our Lord once again for bringing peace to so many brothers and sisters of ours in the past week while the police made endless calls, knocked on their doors, talked with them and took them away," Shouwang Church said in a statement posted at [ChinaAid.org](http://ChinaAid.org).

"He let us experience and testify about the heavenly peace and joy that He bestows us in this period full of tension and devoid of peace."

Shouwang is not a legal, registered church. In China, only churches registered with the government who are members of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement are considered legal. Registration brings heavy restrictions including prohibitions on evangelism, Sunday School, and the baptizing of children and teens, said Bob Fu, president and founder of ChinaAid, which

has been covering Shouwang Church's struggle.

In its statement, the church said it will continue to try and meet as long as God leads them. "Though we often beg God in our prayers to open up a road for us as soon as possible so that we can worship together at an indoor site, in awe we give the road ahead into the hand of God," the church said.

"It is our belief that if He wants us to run further distances in this race than what we have predicted, He must have a beautiful intention in this and He will bestow enough grace

on us so that we have enough endurance and strength to experience the eventual triumph with Him."

More than 160 were arrested the first week Shouwang Church tried to meet outdoors. About 50 were arrested the second week, and approximately 40 were arrested the third week. About 30 were arrested on the fourth week. Thirteen were arrested the fifth week, and 20 were arrested the sixth week. Twenty-five were arrested the seventh week, and at least 20 were arrested the eighth week.

## Egypt offers security, Algeria closes churches, Vietnam sentences pastor

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Egypt's caretaker government stepped up security outside worship centers after 15 people were killed in religious violence in early May. An estimated 190 people were arrested and are expected to stand trial in military courts after two churches were set on fire by Salafi Muslims, according to a report by Christianity Today.

A spokesman for the government's justice committee said authorities would "decisively stand against incitement to hatred and sectarianism," the news service reported. Demonstrations outside places of worship and religious political slogans were banned prior to parliamentary elections set for September, the first since President Hosni Mubarak was ousted on Jan. 25.

A Coptic Christian leader said authorities had been slow

to act when the violence broke out in Imbaba, a western suburb of Cairo. Antonios Aziz Mina, a bishop in Giza, said: "The police need to say clearly to those who have done this: 'You cannot do this. It is not allowed.' Without action from the police and army, it will be chaos, complete anarchy," according to the news report.

"We cannot make peace and reconciliation without first bringing people to justice. Otherwise, the reconciliation is just theatre and the problems will remain."

A Coptic human rights activist, Wagih Yacoub, said Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood organization and militant Salafi Muslims are allied to "empty Egypt of Christians and make it an Islamic state," the report said. "Lots of Egyptian people, including moderate Muslims, are worried. If Egypt becomes

an Islamic state, it may mean civil war."

Islamic militants were taking advantage of newfound freedoms by "imposing a radical agenda and attacking anything they view contrary to Islamic doctrine," said Aidan Clay, a spokesman for the International Christian Concern human rights organization. "They are becoming bolder because the law is not being applied and criminals are not being brought to justice."

Meanwhile, a police commissioner in Algeria has ordered Christian worship places in the country to be closed under a 2006 law restricting non-Muslim worship centers.

The head of the Algerian Protestant Church Association, Mustapha Krim, received a letter dated May 22 from the top police commissioner in his town that warned "the authori-

ties will make sure that the order has to be obeyed and applied, otherwise severe consequences and punishments will be applied," according to a report from Christianity Today.

Algerian Protestants, who number between 10,000 and 100,000, closed more than half their 50 churches in 2008 following a wave of similar orders from local authorities, Christianity Today said. Other churches tried without success to have their churches registered by the government as required by law.

In Vietnam, a Mennonite pastor, Duong Kim Khai, was among seven arrested in Vietnam's southern Ben Tre province, according to an Associated Press report. The defendants were convicted on charges of attempting to overthrow the government and sentences of between two and eight

years in prison were handed down, along with probation of between three to five years.

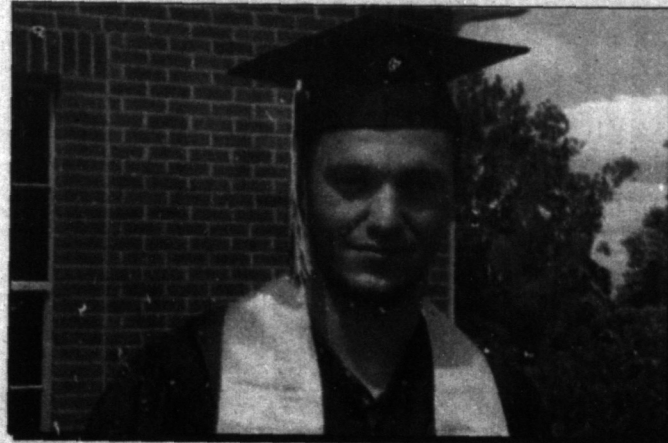
Prior to the trial, five U.S. congressmen asked Vietnam's prime minister, Nguyen Tan Dung, to drop the charges, Associated Press (AP) reported.

A U.S. embassy spokesman in Hanoi told the news service diplomats were denied access to the trial and that several of the defendants reportedly were denied access to legal representation. "Freedom of assembly and expression are fundamental internationally recognized rights," spokesman Beau Miller told the AP. "No individual should be punished for peacefully exercising these rights."

The arrests and sentences, which grew out of a campaign to protest the present state of land rights in the communist country, has been condemned by the United States.



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



2. Williamson



3. Grace United Church, Decatur



4. Scooba Church, Scooba



5. Kilgore recognition



1. Salem Church, Lauderdale County, honored Thomas Jewell Wood upon 70 years of service. He has pastored Salem for the last ten years.
2. Hickory Grove, Sumrall, recognized Tanis Williamsor (shown), 2011 graduate of Sumrall High School, with a lunch May 15.
3. Grace United Church, Decatur, baptized 11 new members May 15. Shown are the candidates with pastor Mark McDonald, left, back row.
4. Scooba Church, Scooba, recognized its graduates on senior day. Shown are Kathy Hutcherson, youth leader, Sarah Dudley, Shelby Sheppard, Hunter Warren, and Courtney Owen.
5. Crowder Church, Crowder, honored Larry Kilgore with a reception upon the completion of his seminary degree. Shown is deacon chairman Joe Warrington presenting Kilgore and his wife Betty a money tree from the church.
6. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto, recognized new babies during a baby dedication. Pastor Hal Hatten recognized Laci Brooke, daughter of Joe Dan and Stacy Leggett; Conner Mason, son of Corey and Heather Buitt; Maeleigh Elizabeth, daughter of Steve and Katie Bowman; and Dylan Cash, son of Daniel and Hanna Brogden. Shown are Hatten, babies, and parents.
7. Dorsey Church, Mooreville, held a baby dedication Apr. 17. Shown are Clint and Kayla Blanchard with Cloe Klair Blanchard.
8. Sylvarena Church, Wesson, honored pastor Stuart Givens for 10 years of service May 22. Shown are Bob Carraway, Givens, Jane Givens, Deemie Letchworth, and Marilyn Britt. The family was honored with a church-wide lunch.
9. The GA's of Sand Hill Church, Ellisville, held a tea party May 28. Shown are the GA girls with their mothers and grandmothers. Mike Martin, pastor.



6. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto



7. The Blanchards



8. Givens recognition



9. Sand Hill Church, Ellisville

## JUST FOR THE RECORD



10. Holcomb Church, Holcomb



11. Spring Hill Church, Waterford

10. Holcomb Church, Holcomb, ordained Mike Mims, Robert Smith, Gary McDaniel, and James Ray Mitchell as deacons. Shown are Corley, Mims, Robert Smith, George Smith, interim pastor, McDaniel, and Mitchell.

11. Three girls from Spring Hill Church, Waterford, attended GA Camp at Garaywa. Shown are Abbi Lay, Madison Newman, Samantha Wells, and counselor Jenn Steele.

12. Union Church, Brookhaven, held an RA recognition June 5. Shown are Matt White, J.C. Smith, Hunter Smith, RA leader Moody Davis, and Hunter Cothren.

13. The sanctuary choir and drama team of Slayden Church, Lamar, presented Your Great Name Apr. 22. Shown are some of the participants.



12. Union Church, Brookhaven



13. Slayden Church, Lamar

## Mississippi Baptist State Coed Softball Tournament results



First Church, Hattiesburg



Broadmoor Church #2, Madison

Winners of the Mississippi Baptist State Coed Softball tournament May 14 were First Church, Hattiesburg, First Place, and Broadmoor Church #2, Madison, Second Place. Next year's men's tournaments will be held on July 15 - 16 and July 29 - 30. For more information, visit [www.msbbaptistrecreation.com](http://www.msbbaptistrecreation.com) or call (601) 898-4969.



# Lottie Moon Offering tops \$145M; misses national goal

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Doubts about the strength of America's economic recovery and rumors of a double-dip recession didn't stop Southern Baptists from giving \$145,662,925 in 2010 to tell the world about Jesus Christ through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

The offering supports the nearly 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries serving around the world through the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, providing housing, salaries, medical care, and children's education. The cost averages \$46,700 annually per individual missionary.

In 2009, that support enabled missionaries and their national partners to baptize more than 360,000 people and start more than 29,000 churches.

IMB President Tom Elliff and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Executive Director/Treasurer Wanda Lee both expressed deep gratitude for Southern Baptists' investment in international missions and faithfulness to fulfill the Great Commission.

"In the midst of continuing economic challenges... this offering total gives evidence that Southern Baptists remained focused on missions," Lee said. "We are grateful for every church and every



Elliff

WMU leader that kept missions before their congregation with a challenge to give sacrificially so all the world may know of our Savior's great love."

The 2010 offering is three million dollars less than the \$148.9 million Southern Baptists gave in 2009, a 2.2% decrease, and \$8.3 million less than IMB needs to meet its 2011 operating budget. Offering receipts also fell well below the national goal of \$175 million.

Elliff said the "deficit is a matter of concern, but the issue is ultimately spiritual, not fiscal."

"Every offering is a picture

of our heart, and it illustrates whether we have faith in God. That's what stewardship is all about," Elliff said. "When we give generously, not only do we accomplish more on the field, but more is accomplished in our own heart because we're expressing our trust in Christ."

"God is calling Southern Baptists to a spiritual awakening, an awakening of our faith without which it is impossible to please Him."

Now, more than ever before, Elliff said, it is critical to press forward with taking the Gospel to those who haven't heard.

"Never has the cry of the lost been more desperate and the opportunity for sharing the Gospel been greater," he said. "The fact that there remain 3,800 people groups that are not engaged with the Gospel coupled with the fact that, barring an awakening of our faith, 1.7 billion people will die without hearing the name of Jesus, should be totally unacceptable to those of us who call ourselves by Christ's name. We will not evangelize the world by simply falling out of bed tomorrow morning and going about our business as usual. We must awaken to the trumpet call of faith."

Elliff said regardless of the budget deficit, IMB will not retreat during what may prove to be the most effective season



Lee

of the organization's 166-year history. "Through our cooperative efforts God has enabled Southern Baptists to develop two of the most dynamic and effective mission organiza-

tions anywhere in the world, six of the finest training institutions in the evangelical world, along with our other wonderful entities that speak to the great need of mankind," he said.

"Add to these the amazing, supernatural strength of our local churches and we have a great cloud of witnesses capable of awesome exploits in the struggle for the souls of men. Your IMB intends to move forward, driven by a sense of urgency and with faith — faith in God and faith in Southern Baptists."

"My prayer is that in the days ahead we will see a level of sacrifice, generosity and concern that we have never seen before within the Southern Baptist Convention. One can only wonder what could be accomplished if we as Southern Baptists rose up to the level of faith that God wants us to experience."



## Mississippi's Hospitals of the Year for 2011.

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# Land slams Obama administration for Israel policies

WASHINGTON (BP) — Israel has had no worse friend in the White House than President Barack Obama, Southern Baptist religious freedom specialist Richard Land told social conservatives gathered in Washington, D.C.

The president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville told participants at a conference sponsored by the Faith and Freedom Coalition that former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon "...said George W. Bush was the best president of the United States that Israel has ever had. If that's true, the worst president of the United States that Israel has ever had is Barack Obama. There is no question that he is pro-Palestinian and his policies are pro-Palestinian."

Land's assessment, expressed in a general session, was echoed



Land

later on June 4 by others in a panel discussion at the conference.

"I think that in Barack Obama we have the most anti-Israel president that we have ever had or ever will have, God willing," said Peter Roff, a contributing editor for U.S. News and World Report, "and his proposal that Israel recede to the pre-1967 borders as a basis of negotiation with Palestinians makes as much sense as proposing that we recede to our pre-Louisiana Purchase borders to satisfy the French."

Obama's May statement about Israel's borders was viewed by friends of the Jewish state as a recent transgression in what they see as a series of signals that this White House does not support the Israelis in the way previous United States presidents have.

"There is now daylight between the United States and

Israel in a way that we have not seen ever. I think, in the history of this country, certainly in the history of Israel," said Frank Gaffney during the panel discussion. Gaffney is president of the Center for Security Policy. "[Israel's enemies] believe that they can now in fact exploit that daylight."

Gaffney told the audience, "When I think of this as as dangerous a time as has happened in my lifetime for Israel, that's really saying something, isn't it? After all, Israel's enemies, which are many, have been trying to drive the Jews into the sea for generations. I fear that they are closer to accomplishing this than ever."

Gaffney pointed to the advance of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and possibly other countries, with the group's goal of forcing Shariah law upon both Muslims and non-Muslims, and the increasing likelihood of a nuclear Iran as threats to Israel.

Land told those in the conference's general session he had "a word of encouragement for our friends in Israel who must be feeling a little abandoned and a little abused and a little used right now."

"My dear friends, help is on the way. With absolute confidence I can tell you that social conservatives in this country are with one voice saying, 'Israel today, Israel tomorrow, and Israel forever. We are with you because God is with you, and we under-

stand that, and we are going to defend your right to live in the land that God gave to you and to your children. Rest assured. Help is on the way. You are not alone."

During the panel discussion, Land said he told Israelis on a visit to their country, "Don't confuse the current administration with the people of the United States."

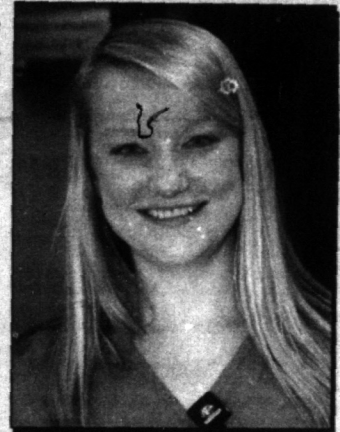
Citing Genesis 12 and 17 in the Bible, Land said in the general session, God has an "everlasting covenant" with the Jewish people and "as promised to bless those who bless the Jews and curse those who curse them. Land supports Israel because it shares the 'same foundational heritage' as the United States and is this country's "only solid, complete ally in the Middle East."

"I also believe that we must bless America because I'm an American and I love America, and I want God to bless America, and God blesses us when we obey Him and He doesn't bless us when we disobey Him," he said. "He has made it very clear that Israel has an ally far more powerful than the United States of America. He's called the Lion of Judah."

"If we want God to bless America, then we have to bless the Jews."

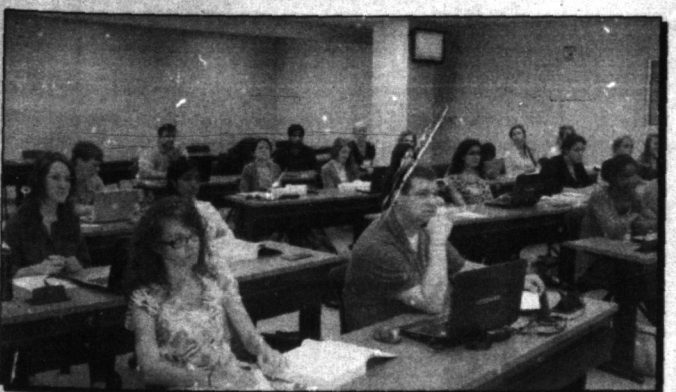
## COLLEGE NEWS

1. **Mississippi College** graduate Laura Finch was recently selected as the Baptist Medical Center Nurse of the Year. She obtained her master's in healthcare administration in 2009.



1. Fitch

2. **Mississippi College** has opened the first physician assistant program in the state of Mississippi. The program began in February. Classes are held in the 10,000 square foot Medical Education Center on the Clinton Campus. Shown are some of the students.



2. MC's physician assistant program

## REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. **Unity Church, Moselle:** Homecoming, June 26; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and gospel music.

2. **Spring Hill Church, Waterford:** Revival, July 17 - 20; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Jimmy Furr, speaker; John Parker, pastor.

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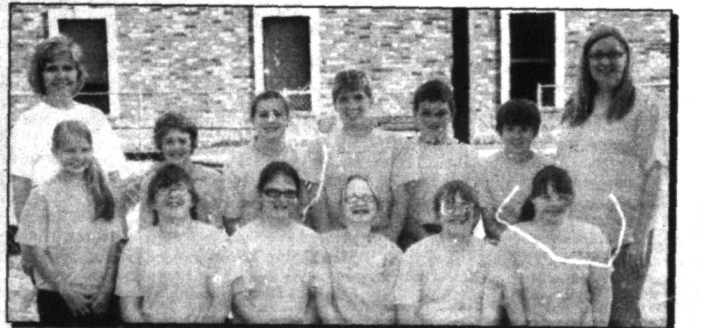
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## BIBLE DRILLS

New Heights Church, Summit, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown are the youth participants, photo 1, and the children participants, photo 2.



1. New Heights Church, Summit



2. New Heights Church, Summit

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

1. **Sunrise Church, Carthage:** June 20 - 24, 6 - 8:45 p.m.; pre-registration, June 18, 10 - 11:30 a.m.; commencement, June 26, 6 p.m., followed by refreshments.

2. **First Church, Belzoni:** Shown is pastor George Johnson with children age 3 through grade 6.



2. First Church, Belzoni

3. **Mt. Carmel Church, Smith County:** June 20 - 24, 6 - 8:30 p.m.; commencement Friday night, 6:30 p.m., followed by fellowship.

4. **Holcomb Church, Holcomb:** June 27 - July 1, 6 - 8 p.m.



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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

APRIL 2011

### MEMORIALS

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Mr. Charles Holmes  
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Mrs. Velma Hooks  
Margaret Quinn & Family  
Sara L. Hough  
Mrs. Mildred H. Stamps  
John H. Hughes  
Billy & Ethel Whitten  
Jim Hutton  
Ray & Jeanne Wise  
Mrs. Mary Ivy  
Rev. Odus Jackson  
Carol & Reggie Smith  
Galilee BC  
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Mrs. Ruth Dixon  
Mrs. Peggy Shuckrow  
Mrs. Elsie J. Sumrow  
Mr. Donald Thompson  
Jackie, Carolyn & Jordan Wooley  
Josh James  
Bradford Chapel BC  
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Bill & Deena Barbee  
Roy V. Jayrell  
Daniel & Dianne Smith  
Mr. Ballard Jenkins  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Mangold  
Mrs. Ruth Johnson  
Mr. & Mrs. George H. Crawford Jr.  
Doyle Jones  
Mrs. Ollie Faye Jones  
Steve & Sandra McMahon  
Wayne & Annette Welch  
Rodney & Janice White  
Lola Jones  
Mrs. Susie Tedder  
Mrs. Mary Jordan  
Mr. & Mrs. Dan W. Southernland  
Mr. Darrell Kelly  
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion  
Peggy Kelly  
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest L. Scruggs

Bronson Kent

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Mrs. Laurie Killebrew  
Larry & Pam Gneini  
Jane & Les Grizzard  
Cigi Grizzard  
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Kimble  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Mangold  
Dr. & Mrs. Carl S. Bozeman  
Jim Kinabrew  
Sweet Spirit Singers, Liberty BC  
Ann Kinabrew  
Lona M. Kinabrew  
C. P. Wilson  
Kristine Wilson  
George King  
Luvata Grenada LLC  
Teresa Ingram Kinsey  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry M. Howell  
Mrs. Eldon Kitching  
Conway BC, Carthage  
Mrs. Dell Whitten Kittrell  
Mr. & Mrs. Floyd E. Fuqua, Jr.  
Vera Lambert  
Arlington Heights BC, Pascagoula  
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Richie & Frances Defenbaugh  
Charles Ray Lee  
Keith & Sandra Warren  
Mark Lee  
Tom & Bettye Coward  
Martha Lee  
Ms. Elizabeth Lee Manon  
Frances Livingston  
Tripp & Beth Thomas  
Monette Lofton  
Concord BC, McCall Creek  
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Mrs. Barbara Ann Denton  
Tommy Magee  
Mrs. Catherine Griffith  
Tony Mallard  
Mrs. Denise Farrar  
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Daniel & Dianne Smith  
Mrs. Brenda Marsalis  
The Nail Family  
Mrs. Mary Marsalis  
Victor & Sherry Walsh

Mandi Phillipson McDade  
Bill & Michelle Beard  
Mrs. Sible McGuffie  
Bunko Friends  
Victor & Sherry Walsh  
Mr. & Mrs. Balfour Lipscomb  
Braxton McKinley  
Glen & Annette Fortenberry  
Helen McMahon  
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Aileen Merritt  
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Mr. Homer F. Woodruff  
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Todd & Tracy Harry  
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Mrs. Pat Duckworth  
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S. T. Reader  
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The Fred & Maudie Dallas Family  
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Stuart & Philene Allen  
Macy Albritton Robinson  
Mr. John Clayton Robinson Jr.  
Mrs. Mildred Roland  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Mangold  
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Ms. Rebecca C. Graham  
Ola Mae Ruth  
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Mr. & Mrs. W. C. Arendale  
Paul Sanders  
Mrs. Doris B. Cole  
Mrs. Peggy Sanford  
Mrs. Karen M. Johnson  
Mr. Lester Saranthus  
Albert R. & Beulah Dulaney

Traci Sasser  
Barney & Paula Albritton  
Mr. Cecil Soay  
Mrs. Ruth Dixon  
Mrs. Leoda Sewell  
Mrs. Maude G. Taylor  
Mr. Larkin Taylor  
Banks Carter Wood Sharp  
Andy & Carrie Oakes  
R. B. (Brent) Shows  
Ms. Audrey L. Hill  
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Bettie Lindley Meek  
James Tommy Slocum  
E. J. & C. B. Forgetston Jr.  
Frances Smith  
Dr. & Mrs. Tommy King  
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## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

### How Much Is Enough

#### Philippians 4:10-20; 1 Timothy 6:6-12

By Beth S. Bowman

The Game Show Network launched a game in 2008 called, "How Much is Enough?" The general objective was to avoid being the greediest player. For each money clock played, a dollar figure was shown that rapidly increases or decreases. Players held lock-out buzzers behind their backs and secretly locked-in at a point when they believe the money clock is high enough to be valuable to them. The show only lasted four months on television. Unfortunately, the concept is still being played today. We compete with our neighbors for the nicest house, we compete with our church members for the best vacations and we will even compete with others in the Kroger line for the best coupons. We, as Americans have a problem with greed.

### Godliness and Contentment: A Great Team

#### 1 Timothy 6:6-8

The first four words sum it up. "Godliness with contentment" is great gain. Contentment in this passage is defined as, "a perfect condition of life in which no aid or support is needed." The illustration that Paul uses is that of a newborn baby, bringing nothing into the world. Job 1:21 and Ecclesiastes 5:15 also echo the same truth that we brought nothing into this world and we will take nothing out with us when we leave. How many people have brought themselves into great poverty because they're not satisfied with what they have? Always wanting something more to add to their possessions. That discontentment has brought many people to bankruptcy. Let's face it, the more you have, the more you have to maintain, dust, organize, sort, upkeep, replace, secure, store, pay for and serve. Be content. Don't mistake your need for God with your need for stuff.

Bowman

### Greed vs. Contentment

#### 1 Timothy 6:9-12

If contentment is gained through experiences and faith, it is destroyed through greed. Paul goes on to warn Timothy about the dangers of the desire to get rich. The word destruction at the end of verse 9 is the same word used in Matthew 7:13, "Enter through the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and there are many who enter through it." (NASB) The call to a sacrificial life in Christ is hard and deliberate. It is the choice to put His will and others needs ahead of our desires for wealth and riches.

### Faith-The Key to Contentment

#### Philippians 4:10-20

Paul emphasizes the gifts that the Philippians had given him and his thankfulness for it. He was illustrating their giving and not his own needs. He goes on to state, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances." (vs 11 NASB) The Lord had given him experiences in which he had learned contentment. Contentment is not a natural reaction to our needs, it's a purposeful choice. After Paul emphasizes the importance of contentment in any and every situation, the verse we can quote comes up next. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (vs 13 NASB) That verse is connected to a faith-yielding contentment in circumstances. We can learn contentment in faith and rest on the strength that God provides. As I write this, my husband, Mark is in Southeast Asia giving every ounce of energy to others. He is my hero in so many areas. A man content with what he has and willing to give away. This past winter when it

turned cold, he could not find his winter jacket. We looked in every closet and every place we thought it might be. He accused me of having one of my cleaning out fits. After a couple of days of being cold, he remembered. A man had come in our church the year before and needed a jacket. Mark gave his away. That is how he lives his life. Content with what he has, unless he sees someone who needs something. Then he is only content to give it away. Mark was raised by a fantastic single Mom and didn't have a lot of money or possessions. Many times people who have not had a lot growing up, will work to fill their lives with stuff but the opposite is true for Mark. He is content in whatever situation he finds himself in. Tomorrow I will pick him up at the airport. And he will smile, kind of apologetically, when we put his empty suitcase in the car.

Bowman is Minister of Connection at First Church, Brandon, and a speaker for women's events.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Living Above Board

#### Jeremiah 7:1-15

By Harold Simmons

In my early teens, some of my friends and I played Monopoly all summer long, every day. We played partners- two and two. My partner and I won almost every game and there was a reason. The partner and I passed Monopoly money back and forth under the table. The other players were not aware of our under the table exchanges. We thought of ourselves as the champion Monopoly players, but we were losers. In Jeremiah's day, people thought they were winners because they were covering all the bases by worshipping idols on the sly and going to the Temple of God for sham worship. Jeremiah brought God's word for the people to live above board.

### Hear the Lord's Word

#### (Jeremiah 7:1-2)

God gives His word by communicating directly with Jeremiah. Jeremiah is to repeat directly to the people who came to the Temple exactly what the Lord had given him. In truth Jeremiah could say: "this is the message God gave to me." This message was not for the benefit of Jeremiah; it was for the people who came to worship. This message is so important that Jeremiah is to accost the people; stop them and get their attention in order that they may intelligently listen to the Lord's word. To listen intelligently is to obey what the Lord says. If people come to God's house to worship and bow down to give reverence to Him, they are to be real with their worship.

Simmons

### Be Authentic In Worship

#### (Jeremiah 7:3-8)

Jeremiah gives weight to what he says- "This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel says" (NIV). Jeremiah wants the people to know this is not something that he came up with on his own. He authenticates what he is telling the people. Jeremiah then gave the Lord's message to the people and that message is this: if you change the way you worship (the vertical relationship) then this will affect how you treat others (the horizontal relationship). The key word here is "justly." It is the same word that Amos used when he said, "Let justice roll down like water." Both prophets were saying that if our relationship with God is right then our relationship with other people will be right.

If we love God, we will love His creation. Jesus continued this idea for His followers-

### God Is Watching

#### (Jeremiah 7:9-11)

Have you ever been in a situation where you suddenly became aware that something or someone was watching you. I have. I was deer hunting during bow season. I found a place that deer used while crossing a small creek. I sat down beside a tree and leaned back against the tree. I was comfortable and nodded off to sleep. Suddenly, I awakened with the feeling that something was watching me. I looked around very slowly and saw a big bobcat not fifteen feet away who was watching me. I don't know what that big cat had in mind but I do know what I had in mind. I was thinking: Harold, this is not good (or something close to that). Before that rude awakening I was feeling very safe and comfortable.

### Lessons Learned

#### (Jeremiah 7:12-15)

In the Air Force when a report is written about an incident, there is usually a section at the end of the report that is entitled "lessons learned." God is reminding the people of Jeremiah's day what he did at Shiloh as a result of sin. Then, He reminds them that He has made efforts to reach them. He has tried again and again to turn their obstinate hearts back to Him. If they continue in their ways, God promises them that there will be consequences. There will be destruction and they will be separated from God. The same is true for us in our day.

Simmons is currently interim pastor at Cascilla Church, Cascilla

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number. Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

# THE BAPTIST Record



# Production for '12 VBS already underway at LifeWay

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Even as 2011 Vacation Bible Schools are underway across the Southern Baptist Convention, the 2012 theme has been finalized and is in production.

"Amazing Wonders Aviation: Encountering God's Awesome Power," will be the 2012 Vacation Bible School (VBS) theme for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. A LifeWay news release on June 6 noted:

Think vintage aviation from the 1930s and 40s: biplanes and bomber jackets. Children, students and adult VBS participants will fly to some of the world's greatest natural wonders as they encounter an awesome God and His amazing power. They will take off each day from the Amazing Wonders Aviation airstrip and visit some of the world's most beautiful and marvelous God-made creations: Victoria Falls, the Northern Lights, Paricutin Volcano, the Great Barrier Reef, the Grand Canyon, and the Matterhorn.

The theme is taken from Psalm 147:5: "Our Lord is great, vast in power; His understanding is infinite" (HCSB).



UP, UP, AND AWAY — Jeff Slaughter, Vacation Bible School music creator, and VBS kids rehearse a portion of a 2012 Vacation Bible School video in front of a vintage Vultee Valiant BT-13 aircraft. The 2012 theme will be "Amazing Wonders Aviation: Encountering God's Awesome Power." (BP photo)



The June 6 announcement coincided with a live online VBS announcement event from Nashville featuring Jeff Slaughter, creator of all things musical for LifeWay VBS; Jerry Wooley, LifeWay's VBS specialist; and others who introduced the theme from a vintage airstrip/hangar.

"This year we changed things up a bit," Wooley said. "In the past the VBS theme has been based on one location or idea. This year, the theme is based on six beautiful God-made natural wonders."

Decorating will be easy for the aviation-themed VBS because each location is the site of one of the rotations, Wooley said. The rotations, as noted in the news release, will be:

- **Bible Study at Victoria Falls.** Located in Africa in both Zambia and Zimbabwe, it is the world's largest waterfall based on width and height.

- **Missions under the Northern Lights.** This natural phenomenon can be seen from many places in the world, with gorgeous multicolored lights dancing across the nighttime sky.

- **Snacks at Paricutin Volcano.** This volcano in Mexico is the youngest volcano in North America and is considered a natural wonder because mankind witnessed its birth.

- **Crafts at the Great Barrier Reef.** Found off the coast of Australia, the GBR is the largest coral reef system on the planet and hosts some of the most amazing and beautiful sea life anywhere.

- **Recreation at the Grand Canyon.** Located in northern Arizona, the Grand Canyon is recognized for its overall size and beautifully colored landscape.

- **Music at the Matterhorn.** Situated in Switzerland, the Matterhorn has a four-sided

pyramidal peak with each side facing the four compass points.

"We want everyone who attends VBS to know the power of our awesome God," Wooley said. "He has the power to create

these awesome natural wonders, but He also has the power to make an awesome impact on our lives. We want them to know they can rely on God's power to do whatever He wants them to do."

VBS is one of the most effective evangelistic activities within the Southern Baptist Convention. For 2009 (latest figures available), more than 25,000 churches hosted VBS. More than 2.8 million children, students, and adults were enrolled and more than 88,000 people made professions of faith in Christ.

The 2012 VBS Previews — events that sell out every year — will be Jan. 6-7 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina; Jan. 13-14 at Travis Avenue Church in Fort Worth, Texas; Jan. 26-27 and 27-28 at LifeWay's headquarters in Nashville; and Feb. 17-18 at First Church in Kissimmee, Fl.

Discounts are available for those who register early.

Continuously updated information about the 2012 VBS can be accessed at [LifeWay.com/VBS](http://LifeWay.com/VBS).

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